

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method for fabricating a smaller-sized glass rod by elongation of a glass matrix, which comprises:
 - providing a glass body having a cylindrical form,
 - grinding a surface of said glass body,
 - applying pressurized steam to the ground surface surfaces of said glass body,
 - subjecting the glass body that received the pressurized steam to a subsequent and separate step wherein the glass body is heated heating ~~the thus-applied glass body~~ to soften the glass body to an extent sufficient for subsequent elongation, and
 - elongating the softened glass body thereby providing a glass rod having a desired diameter.
2. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said steam has a temperature ranging from 120 to 160°C when being applied against the ground surface of the glass body.
3. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said steam has a pressure ranging from 0.27 to 0.63 MPa when being applied against the ground surface of the glass body.

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4. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said glass body is ground into a cylinder with free or fixed grains on the surface thereof prior to the application of the pressurized steam.
5. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 4, wherein after the grinding, said glass body is cleaned with an aqueous solution of an alkali or acid,
6. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the steam is applied by jetting against said glass body from at least one nozzle unit provided around said glass body.
7. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 6, wherein said nozzle unit is in a form of a ring having a plurality of nozzles along an inner periphery thereof in face-to-face relation with said glass body.
8. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 6, wherein the application is carried out by moving said at least one nozzle unit while fixing said glass body.
9. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 6, wherein the application is carried out by moving said glass body while fixedly holding said at least one nozzle unit.

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10. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said glass matrix is made of a glass preform.
11. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said glass body is made of a glass ingot.
12. canceled.